

Patrick Goudou, Executive Director of the European Aviation Safety Agency

as featured in Private Jet Magazine™ online

Patrick Goudou was born in 1950 in Paris, France. After graduating from the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, he went on to train at the Ecole Supérieure de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace in Toulouse with a specialization in aero-engines.

In 1975 he started his professional career at the French General Delegation for Armaments (Délégation Générale pour l'Armement – DGA), where he worked primarily in the aeronautical sector. For ten years he was responsible for testing civil and military aero-engines at the DGA Engines Test Centre at Saclay. He was then appointed to a series of management posts in economic control and industrial strategy, with particular emphasis on the aerospace industry and the question of its restructuring to European level. In 1997 he became Director for Commercial and International Affairs at the French shipyard DCN.

At the beginning of 2002 he was appointed Chief Executive of the French Aeronautical Maintenance Agency (Service de la maintenance aéronautique – SMA), a body responsible for engineering, industrial maintenance and repairs to aircraft, engines and aircraft equipment, as well as for the design and production of aeronautical parts.

He has been Executive Director of the European Aviation Safety Agency since the Agency's start of operations in 2003.

He is married and has three children.

- Patrick, you were born in France in 1950. Where in life were you when you heard the call of aviation and aerospace?

I was fascinated by aviation from a very early age, around seven I think!

- Your early career pursuits involved aviation engines. Was that by chance?

Actually no: I was very interested in physics and especially thermodynamics – and aviation of course!

- In 2002 you were appointed Chief Executive of the Aeronautical Maintenance Agency (AMA). What is their business interest and your work there?

The main field of activities was overhaul and maintenance for military aircraft, engines and equipment. The scope was very diverse, from fighters to transport and school aircraft, but also to the design of radomes. It is a large organisation with around 3,300 staff at the time.

- EASA called in September of 2003. Tell us about the transition.

It was a big change, from an already well established organisation to a completely new one. It was quite challenging but at the same time exciting, and was rewarded by the very good outcome, thanks to a very dedicated and enthusiastic team of people.

- The highest common standards of safety and environmental protection for civil aviation in Europe and worldwide are the mandates of the European Aviation Safety Agency. Expand on the EASA mission.

The Agency's mission covers all aspects of civil aviation safety, and also environmental protection.

First of all, the Agency develops common safety and environmental rules at the European level. It drafts aviation safety legislation and provides technical advice to the European Commission and to the Member States. It also develops close working relationships with counterpart organisations across the world including the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), aiming at harmonising standards and promoting best practice.

A second important mission of EASA is to ensure the uniform implementation of European aviation safety legislation. This is achieved through inspections in the Member States and by providing the necessary technical expertise, training and research.

Furthermore, while national authorities continue to carry out many operational tasks, such as certification of individual aircraft or licensing of pilots, the Agency has some executive responsibilities in the areas of type-certification and the approval of organisations.

Finally an important task of the Agency is the collection and analysis of safety-related data as well as research to improve safety. In this context, EASA launched in 2006 the European Strategic Safety Initiative (ESSI), which embraces commercial aviation, helicopters and general aviation. In the medium-term, the Agency will also be responsible for safety-related authorisations of third-country operators wishing to operate in the EU as well as for the safety of airports and air traffic management systems.

- How does "validation" between EASA and FAA come into play as it relates to type certification recognition for Private Jets?

Validation is the process whereby the type certificate of a non-EU product is validated by EASA, which results in the issue of an EASA type certificate. Validation can only take place when the State of Design of the non-EU product has entered a bilateral agreement with the European Union, or members of that Union, which is the case for the USA. The process is well-established and is the same, regardless of the aircraft type. The process for Very Light Jets is therefore the same for a rotorcraft or a large transport aircraft.

- How does the certification process at EASA compare to FAA's program?

Certification processes on both sides of the Atlantic are essentially identical; differences only existing where Federal and EU law differ. Validation of US products is carried out in accordance with Type Validation Principles (TVP) which is a set of harmonised procedures that are followed by both EASA and FAA. This details the processes and responsibilities of each party for the validation of the other's products; the processes at both EASA and FAA are therefore identical. However, EU law requires that EASA finds compliance with European airworthiness requirements. Whereas these are largely common with US airworthiness requirements, there are some differences and there may also be differences in interpretation. The EASA investigation concentrates on those areas and on any novel or unusual features. The validation process is monitored by both FAA and EASA at both technical and managerial levels to ensure a mutually acceptable outcome.

- The Private Jet market in Europe is experiencing unprecedented growth. What are the EASA forecasts for anticipated deliveries over the next ten years?

It is certainly a growing market for which we are prepared. Please understand, however, that I do not comment specific commercial market forecasts.

- How is EASA preparing for the huge increases in aircraft operations?

To ensure that the high level of safety we enjoy in Europe is maintained while the number of operations increases, we need binding, pan-European safety rules and an effective implementation. The Agency is prepared for this. In the areas of initial and continuing airworthiness, the set of rules is already there. However, this is only the start. My vision for the Agency's role is based on the conviction that aviation safety has to be seen as a whole, as a system. The first step was taken with the adoption by the EU of the Agency's new "Basic Regulation" (Regulation (EC) No 216/2008), making the Agency responsible for air operations, flight crew licensing and the authorisation of third-country operators. In line with the "total system approach", the Agency is already preparing for the next step: to progressively extend its competences in the areas of Aerodromes, Air Navigation Services (ANS) and Air Traffic Management (ATM). This will make the Agency responsible for all aspects of civil aviation safety.

A further priority for the Agency is the protection of the environment. EASA published this year a consultation document, proposing improvements in environmental protection in the regulation of European civil aviation. Currently, the Agency's role is limited essentially to ensure the environmental compatibility of aircraft and engines according to ICAO requirements. Taking into account that all aspects of aviation have an environmental dimension, our proposals suggest a number of essential requirements, including for example measures to ensure aircraft are operated in an environmentally appropriate way.

Finally, I should recall that the Agency is not alone, but operates in close partnership with the national authorities who will continue to carry out many operational tasks.

- Thank you, Patrick Goudou, Executive Director of EASA for your time and interest in Private Jet Magazine.

Thank you, Bill.